**UNITED NATIONS** **ST**

**Secretariat**

ST/SGB/1997/8
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SECRETARY-GENERAL'S BULLETIN

ORGANIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

The Secretary-General, pursuant to Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5, entitled "Organization of the Secretariat of the United Nations", and for the purpose of establishing the organizational structure of the Office of Legal Affairs,[1] promulgates the following:

Section 1

General provision

The present bulletin shall apply in conjunction with Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5, entitled "Organization of the Secretariat of the United Nations".

Section 2

Functions and organization

2.1 The Office of Legal Affairs is the central legal service of the Organization and provides legal advice to the Secretary-General, Secretariat departments and offices and United Nations organs in the field of public and private law; represents the Secretary-General in legal conferences and in judicial proceedings; performs substantive and secretariat functions for legal organs involved in public international law, the law of the sea and international trade law; and performs the functions conferred on the Secretary-General in Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

2.2 The Office is divided into organizational units, as described in the present bulletin.

[1] The Office of Legal Affairs was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 13 (I) of 13 February 1946 as the central legal service for the Secretary-General and his Secretariat and United Nations organs.

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2.3 The Office is headed by the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Legal Counsel. The Legal Counsel and the officials in charge of each organizational unit, in addition to the specific functions set out in the present bulletin, perform the general functions applicable to their positions, as set out in Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5.

## Section 3

## Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Legal Counsel

3.1 The Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Legal Counsel, is accountable to the Secretary-General.

3.2 The Legal Counsel is responsible for all the activities of the Office of Legal Affairs, as well as its administration; represents the Secretary-General at meetings and conferences of a legal nature; represents the Secretary-General in judicial and arbitral proceedings; certifies legal instruments issued on behalf of the United Nations; and convenes meetings of the legal advisers of the United Nations system and represents the United Nations at such meetings.

## Section 4

## Office of the Legal Counsel

4.1 The Office of the Legal Counsel is headed by a Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General who is accountable to the Legal Counsel.

4.2 The core functions of the Office of the Legal Counsel are as follows:

(a) Assisting the Legal Counsel in the overall direction and management of the Office of Legal Affairs and in the coordination of legal advice and services to the United Nations as a whole;

(b) Preparing legal opinions, studies and advice on the interpretation of the Charter and on the interpretation and drafting of rules of international public law, including international criminal and humanitarian law, United Nations resolutions and regulations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, as well as preparing agreements and other legal instruments regulating relations of the United Nations with Member States, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other legal entities;

(c) Preparing legal arrangements for and providing advice on legal aspects of peacekeeping and other United Nations operations and activities;

(d) Preparing draft rules of procedure and advising United Nations organs and conferences on the conduct of business;

(e) Providing secretariat services to the Committee on Relations with the Host Country and dealing with questions arising out of the Headquarters Agreement with the United States of America and other host Governments;

(f) Maintaining liaison with the International Court of Justice and discharging the legal responsibilities of the Secretary-General under the Statute of the Court;

(g) Advising on questions relating to the credentials of permanent representatives to the United Nations and representatives on United Nations organs, and providing secretariat services to the Credentials Committee;

(h) Preparing studies on relevant Articles of the Charter for the Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs.

## Section 5

## General Legal Division

5.1 The General Legal Division is headed by a Director who is accountable to the Legal Counsel.

5.2 The core functions of the Division are as follows:

(a) Preparing legal opinions, studies and advice on the administrative law of the Organization, on international private law and on United Nations resolutions and regulations dealing with such matters;

(b) Providing legal advice to the United Nations voluntary programmes and funds in connection with operational activities in the economic and social fields, including the interpretation of their mandates, regulations and rules and the preparation and negotiation of standard instruments;

(c) Providing legal advice on procurement, the drafting and negotiation of contracts and other commercial matters, as well as claims and disputes involving operational activities of the Organization, its organs and voluntary programmes and funds;

(d) Providing legal advice on the legislative and operational arrangements governing the staffing, supply and provisioning of peacekeeping, observer and humanitarian missions, as well as claims arising therefrom;

(e) Representing the Secretary-General before the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and other bodies in commercial and other disputes relating to matters upon which the Division provides advice;

(f) Preparing studies on relevant Articles of the Charter for the Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs.

## Section 6

## Codification Division

6.1 The Codification Division is headed by a Director who is accountable to the Legal Counsel.

6.2 The core functions of the Division are as follows:

(a) Assisting and providing secretariat and legal research services to the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly, the International Law Commission, the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization and other organs of the United Nations, including diplomatic conferences, in the codification and development of international law;

(b) Preparing analytical papers, background studies and drafts of international conventions and agreements;

(c) Preparing, reviewing and coordinating studies for the Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs;

(d) Preparing publications and disseminating information on international law;

(e) Organizing seminars and training programmes.

## Section 7

## Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea

7.1 The Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea is headed by a Director who is accountable to the Legal Counsel.

7.2 The core functions of the Division are as follows:

(a) Providing advice, studies, assistance and research on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, on issues of a general nature and on specific developments relating to the research and legal regime for the oceans;

(b) Providing substantive servicing to the General Assembly on the law of the sea and ocean affairs, to the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention and to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf;

(c) Providing support to the organizations of the United Nations system to facilitate consistency with the Convention of the instruments and programmes in their respective areas of competence;

(d) Discharging the responsibilities, other than depositary functions, of the Secretary-General under the Convention;

(e) Conducting monitoring and research activities and maintaining a comprehensive information system and research library on the Convention and on the law of the sea and ocean affairs;

(f) Providing training and fellowship and technical assistance in the field of the law of the sea and ocean affairs;

(g) Preparing studies on relevant Articles of the Charter for the Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs.

## Section 8

## International Trade Law Branch

8.1 The International Trade Law Branch is headed by a Chief who is accountable to the Legal Counsel.

8.2 The core functions of the Branch are as follows:

(a) Providing secretariat and legal research services to the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law and its subsidiary bodies;

(b) Assisting United Nations organs, bodies and conferences in matters relating to international trade law;

(c) Collecting and disseminating information on the law of international trade;

(d) Providing substantive support to technical cooperation activities and training and assistance involving international trade law;

(e) Preparing studies on relevant Articles of the Charter for the Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs.

## Section 9

## Treaty Section

9.1 The Treaty Section is headed by a Chief who is accountable to the Legal Counsel.

9.2 The core functions of the Section are as follows:

(a) Analysing, registering, filing, recording and publishing treaties and other international agreements pursuant to Article 102 of the Charter;

(b) Discharging the Secretary-General's depositary functions under multilateral treaties;

(c) Issuing publications pursuant to Article 102 of the Charter and the related General Assembly Regulations, developing and maintaining an electronic

database and information system to facilitate access to treaty information and providing advice and information on treaty law and related matters;

(d) Collaborating in the drafting of formal clauses of treaties and agreements concluded under the auspices of the United Nations;

(e) Preparing studies on relevant Articles of the Charter for the Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs.

## Section 10

## Secretariat of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal

The secretariat of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal is headed by the Executive Secretary, who performs legal and secretariat services for the Tribunal and who is accountable to the President of the Tribunal for all substantive matters and to the Legal Counsel for matters of administration not dealing with the substantive functions of the Tribunal.

## Section 11

## Executive Office

11.1 The Executive Office is headed by an Executive Officer who is accountable to the Legal Counsel.

11.2 The core functions of the Office are set out in section 7 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5.

## Section 12

## Final provisions

12.1 The present bulletin shall enter into force on 15 September 1997.

12.2 Secretary-General's bulletin of 14 November 1994, entitled "Functions and organization of the Office of Legal Affairs" (ST/SGB/Organization, Section: OLA/Rev.1), is hereby abolished.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN
Secretary-General

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